



A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO THE 41st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
(Including Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Encino, Malibu, Hidden Hills, Lake Sherwood, Oak Park, Pacific Palisades, Port Hueneme, South Oxnard, Santa Monica, Tarzana, Topanga, Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills.)

JUNE 2006 EDITION

Legislature Passes 2006-07 State Budget On Time

On Tuesday night, June 27, the State Assembly and Senate passed a record \$131 billion state budget. Compared to some prior budget sessions which have lasted well into the morning, on Tuesday night, this one passed before midnight, which was the earliest that a budget consensus has been reached. The low point would have to be the long hot summer of 2002, when a handful of Assembly Republicans held the majority hostage, denying the 2/3 vote needed until September 1, two months past the Constitutional deadline.

It is always a challenge to reach a budget compromise because of this 2/3 ("supermajority") vote threshold. Whichever party is in the minority becomes disproportionately more powerful, and can demand budget cuts or pork-barrel projects for their districts as their price for voting for a budget. The unexpected \$7.5 billion in unanticipated state revenue from a surge in tax receipts this year made the budget "dance" easier, although some of those revenues are one-time in nature.

In broad terms, the 2006-07 budget fully funds and restores money previously "borrowed" by the Governor from the K-12 education budget under Proposition 98, it begins to pay down debt, allows for one-time investment in some worthwhile programs, and provides for repayment of Proposition 42 (transportation) money. Local governments and schools both benefit from this budget.

Highlights of some budget items that are most relevant to the 41st AD:

Education

- *\$534 billion for discretionary block grants to schools.*
- *A new \$500 billion block grant to school districts to be used for art or music supplies, and/or physical education equipment.*
- *\$100 million in grants to districts to use for one-time expenditures for instructional or library materials, or education technology.*
- *\$40 million for career technical education.*
- *\$30 million for supplemental instructional materials for English learners.*
- *Equalization money that will benefit several school districts in the 41st AD.*

Higher Education

- *Reduction in community college fees from \$26 to \$20 per unit by Spring of 2007.*
- *No increase in CSU or UC tuition.*



Transportation

- *Repayment of \$920 million from the suspension of Proposition 42 (gas tax) funding, with interest. Will benefit local road and transportation projects.*
- *Keeps all gas tax "spillover" funds in transportation, and prevents the Governor from shifting more than \$4 billion away from transportation projects.*

Health and Human Services

The Assembly Democrats made child and foster care programs a priority this year. Foster children are usually "on their own" by the age of 18, sometimes with literally no roof over their heads nor the ability to continue their education. A pilot program for the adoption of older foster youth will be initiated.

I was personally thrilled with the results of the advocacy efforts of the "Family Caucus" Assemblymembers Barbara Matthews, Betty Karnette, Russ Bogh, and I -- to generate a significant increase in funding for job programs for adults with developmental disabilities. Nearly \$100 million is now earmarked for the Regional Center system.

Environment

- *\$250 million for deferred maintenance in our State Parks.*
- *\$ 31.5 million for alternative fuels.*
- *\$ 36 million for climate change-related activities.*
- *\$ 13.6 million to implement the Marine Life Protection Act.*

One of my biggest disappointments was the continued suspension of the Teacher Retention Tax Credit. This tax credit was an inexpensive way for the state to reimburse teachers for the hundreds of dollars that teachers often spend out of their own pockets for classroom books and supplies, paper, and even things like Kleenex. The Governor recommended continuing the suspension, and, unfortunately, both the Democrat and Republican leadership agreed. I urged my colleagues in an impassioned speech on the Assembly floor to recognize the importance of this tax credit and to commit to funding this measure in 2007-08. Teachers need to let their legislators, CTA, CFT, and/or UTLA hear from them that the reinstatement of this credit should be a priority for next year.

July 1, Three Laws I Authored Go Into Effect

- **AB 2943 - Mercury In Vaccines**
Prohibits the use of mercury in vaccines given to children under age three and pregnant women if above trace levels. Mercury is known to cause developmental disorders in babies and young children. The scientific and medical communities have been debating the possible link between mercury in vaccines and the development of autism. Some studies suggest a correlation while others do not. Nonetheless, experts widely agree that mercury and its compounds are neurotoxins and can damage developing nervous systems.
- **AB 1125 and AB 2901 - E-Waste Recycling**
Both require retailers to take back rechargeable batteries and cell phones for proper recycling. Cell phones and rechargeable batteries contain hazardous materials which, if improperly disposed of, can leak out and contaminate soil and groundwater. These two new laws represent the first time that California retailers will have to share the responsibility for collection and recycling of environmentally-problematic products they sell.

41st AD's Taft High School Wins National Academic Decathlon. For the Third Time!

On April 26, Taft High School in Woodland Hills clinched the 25th annual United States Academic Decathlon, and did it for the third time. The Academic Decathlon is one of the premier academic competitions for high school students in the country. It consists of 10 events, which include seven tests, two performance events, and an essay. This year members of the Taft High School team dominated the competition, earning 43 individual medals and seven overall medals in the two-day competition in San Antonio, Texas.



This is a remarkable accomplishment, and State Senator Sheila Kuehl and I were extraordinarily proud to recognize each of the team members with a joint resolution from the State Legislature at ceremonies both at the Taft campus and on the State Assembly floor. My warmest congratulations to team members Zachary Ellington, Michael Farrell, Farhan Khan, David Lopez, David Novgorodsky, Julia Rebrova, Atish Sawant, Dean Schaffer, and Monica Schettler for the countless hours of training they devoted in their determination to develop themselves as a team to its fullest potential.

Such a success could not have happened without the experience, dedication, and guidance of team coach, Art Berchin, and the support of the teachers, the student body, and the staff at Taft High School. I also want to recognize and thank all of them for helping the team with this great win.

Public Awareness Campaign for PCH Cyclists

Although one of the most scenic highways in California, Pacific Coast Highway also has additional risks created by the millions of travelers driving too fast, being distracted by cars cutting into traffic, entering and exiting from beach parking lots and businesses, the narrowness of the road itself, and a multitude of other constraints that make the need for driver awareness especially important. PCH was also designated a State Bicycle Route in 1990. For cyclists who enjoy riding along this beautiful route, the lack of adequate shoulders or a marked bike path makes riders particularly vulnerable.

Senator Sheila Kuehl convened her PCH Taskforce in 1998, made up of law enforcement, local government officials, cycle clubs, and a wide range of other stakeholders. Since then it has been a place where safety issues could be addressed in a collaborative setting. I've been pleased to be a part of this Taskforce for the past six years.



Last fall, following another bicycle fatality on PCH, the Taskforce reconvened. It was agreed that there was a need for greater awareness among both drivers and cyclists that they are all sharing the road. Among other suggestions that will be implemented out of that meeting was that Caltrans would add 18 new "Share the Road" signs along PCH between Decker Canyon and Chautauqua Road. The unveiling of the new road signs took place on June 23, just in time for the annual summer increase in traffic.

Exhaust and Children's Health: A Bad Combination

Scientists know that the exhaust from cars, trucks and buses contains chemicals that can cause breathing problems and asthma attacks, with asthma rates spiking to record high levels in children. Recent studies show that children living near busy roads have more asthma symptoms and higher rates of bronchitis. It makes sense to reduce children's exposures to air pollution from nearby traffic as much as possible. But also, outdoor air pollutants enter indoor spaces through open windows and doors, ventilation systems, and infiltration through cracks and leaks.

Since young children may spend a significant part of their day in childcare facilities located near busy highways and freeways, this can increase their exposure.

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has released a fact sheet for childcare providers that you may want to consider if you have a child who spends time in a child care facility. Play areas should be located away from traffic as much as possible. If located near a busy highway, windows and doors should be closed during peak traffic hours, and air filters in the HVAC systems should be upgraded and properly maintained. The complete fact sheet on how childcare facilities can reduce exposure to the children in their care can be found at www.oehha.ca.gov/public_info/facts/childcare053106.html.

UC Students May Study in Israel More Easily

When I was in Jerusalem in December with the Jewish Federation, a very big issue with some of the California students studying in Israel was the institutional barriers that currently make it difficult for them to remain within the University of California system. I signed a letter that was sent to Robert Dynes, President of the University of California, expressing my concerns about this situation. Last week I received a letter from Mr. Dynes advising that the UC system is moving forward with the following actions by the beginning of this fall.

- A leave of absence status that will enable UC students who wish to study in non-UC sponsored study abroad programs to pursue those studies without having to withdraw from the UC, and to return to their home campus automatically at the conclusion of their studies abroad.
- A point person on each campus for students interested in studying in countries affected by Travel Warnings to provide the necessary information on how to make arrangements.
- An expanded website for each campus that delineates the steps required for study in all non-UC sponsored study abroad programs.



It is Mr. Dynes' hope that the situation in Israel and elsewhere will improve enough for the U.S. State Department to lift the Travel Warnings so that the UC can reopen its own study programs.

2006 Seabee Days in Port Hueneme

The 41st AD is the home of Naval Base Ventura County and the Construction Battalion Center (CBC) -- "Home of the Seabees" since 1942. On June 24, they kicked off the 20th Annual Seabee Days, with the participation of over 800 Seabees in the Opening Ceremonies, all in their impressive dress whites. Captain Steven M. Wirsching, Commander of the Seabee Readiness Group made remarks to all the visitors in attendance.

3,000 Seabees are stationed at the CBC. Between WWII in 1942 when they were established, and right up to the present, Seabees have performed their "We Build. We Fight" mission in defense of our nation. More than 16,000 active duty and Reserve U.S. Navy Seabees men and women serve as today's "combat engineers," providing construction and humanitarian support throughout the world. Seabees provide disaster assistance, ex., after Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma helping to clear roads, make repairs to schools, delivering emergency meals and supplies; and in Pakistan after the devastating earthquake, spearheading engineering support for debris removal, and building temporary living shelters. The list goes on and on.

Most recently, Seabee battalions are serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, constructing base camps and combat outposts for coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, repairing roads and bridges, and playing a significant role in Iraq's December elections through projects to ensure safe elections.

It was moving to see the assembled Seabees on the parade field, and particularly so when they "passed in review." The weekend-long event included construction equipment and weaponry, displays of all kinds, tours of the Base, carnival events for the kids, and a tour of the USS Comstock.

Bits 'n' Pieces

- B of A offers hybrid vehicle credits

I was very interested to learn earlier this month about an incentive program that the Bank of America is offering to its employees that will help clean up our nation's air. The bank will reimburse \$3,000 to their more than 21,000 employees who live within 90 miles of Los Angeles, Boston, or Charlotte toward the purchase of a new low-emissions hybrid vehicle. This is a pilot program of the bank, which will be evaluated for employee participation to see whether it could be offered to all B of A employees. Kudos to this environmentally-minded business for caring about air pollution and the positive role that alternative-fueled vehicles can play in reducing global warming caused by tailpipe emissions.



- Agoura Hills Gets New Fire Station
The ribbon was cut on Friday, June 16, for the newest L.A. County Fire Station #89 in Agoura Hills. This is the first fire station in the city on the north side of the 101 freeway, which will ensure that the County Fire Department is able to respond quickly in the event that any of the freeway overpasses go down and cut off Station #65, south of the freeway. Given the special wildfire risks of this area, Station #89 is a wonderful and warmly welcomed new member of the Agoura Hills community.

- **Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation Installs New Officers**

The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation just celebrated its 39th anniversary of protecting the Santa Monica Mountains environment, expanding public parkland, and preserving the rural character of the region. It represents 25 homeowner associations committed to the same principles. On Friday evening, June 23, the Federation swore in its 2006 officers -- President, John Low; Vice President, Mary Hubbard; Secretary, Kathy Berkowitz; and Treasurer, Joan Yacovone.

I was pleased to provide some keynote remarks at the banquet, along with Woody Smeck, Superintendent of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The evening also included recognition of long-time park activist, Margot Feuer, who was named as the Federation's "Citizen of the Year," and of Steve Hess, outgoing 2004-06 Federation President.

- **Energy Rebates and Incentives for Businesses**

Southern California Gas Company has expanded its energy-efficient programs for businesses by allowing more of its customers to qualify and by increasing the benefits on some of their programs, offering as much as \$300,000 in rebates and incentives per customer per year. The Gas Company has programs for both its largest business customers and for smaller businesses. To find out how your business can save energy, which means saving you money, contact your representative at The Gas Company, or visit their website at www.socalgas.com/business.

- **Oak Park USD Receives Solar Grant**

Congratulations to the Oak Park Unified School District on their successful application for a grant from the California Energy Commission to participate in the Solar Schools Program. The award of the grant means that solar installations will now be added to Brookside, Oak Hills, and Red Oak Elementary Schools.

- **Palisades Charter High School Recycling Drive**

Congratulations to Palisades Charter High School students Raphael Giannini and Jennifer Arceo, and to their teacher Steve Engelmann, for arranging a recycling drive for used cell phones and printer cartridges. Both of these items contain toxins that can leak out in landfills and contaminate the soil and groundwater. By helping to educate people on the importance of recycling these and other used electronics, they have helped to protect our water quality and to inspire others to think about recycling waste vs. improper disposal into the trash.



Santa Monica – “The Future of Alternative Fuels in California”

With gasoline prices sky high, it is time for California to develop a long-range strategy for increasing and diversifying the state's transportation fuel supply. On **Friday, July 21 at the Santa Monica College Concert Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd., from 10:00 a.m. to noon** I will be co-chairing what should be a very interesting hearing with Senator Sheila Kuehl. It will include a panel of experts in the field discussing ways to increase the use and production of alternative fuels in order to reduce dependency on oil, and reduce air and global warming pollution. Parking is free in Campus Lot #1.

Oxnard – Unclaimed Property Workshop

Every day, the State of California receives thousands of dollars worth of unclaimed money and property from forgotten dormant accounts. Last year more than 239,000 accounts were re-claimed. There are now 7.6 million accounts waiting to be returned to their rightful owners. One could have your name on it. I am hosting this workshop on **Thursday, July 20 at the Oxnard Public Library, 2nd Floor, 251 “A” Street from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Learn about California's unclaimed property program, and get assistance searching the database to see if the state is holding your money or property and how to file a claim to have it returned. For more information, or to search the State Controller's website yourself, go to www.controller.ca.gov.



Assemblymember Pavley's Committee Assignments

Budget Committee
Education Committee
Transportation Committee
Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee

Chair, Budget Subcommittee #3 on Resources
Chair, Select Committee on Air and Water Quality
Select Committee on Runaway Production
Select Committee on Ports
Select Committee on Title IX
Joint Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security

Legislative Advisory Committee – Wildlife Conservation Board
Co-Chair, Environmental Caucus
Legislative Advisory Committee – California Coastal Conservancy
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Board
Member, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
Member, Commission on the Status of Women

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